

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-2 and 7-14 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 14 have been amended. Claims 3-6 have been cancelled.

In item 1 on pages 2-5 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-2 and 7-14 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Yraceburu et al. (US Pat. No. 6,409,332 B1) in view of Medin et al. (US Pat. No. 6,328,440) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The rejection has been noted and claims 1 and 14 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found on page 18, line 26 to page 19, line 4 of the specification as well as Fig. 3.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claims 1 and 14 call for, inter alia:

said first suction chamber and said further suction chambers having termination edges, said termination edges limiting said first suction chamber and said further suction chambers in the transportation direction.

As indicated by the Examiner in the second to last paragraph on page 4 of the Office action, Yraceburu et al. do not disclose the further suction chambers having a greater negative pressure than that of the first suction chamber.

However, the Examiner has stated in the first paragraph on page 5 of the Office action that Medin et al. disclose further suction chambers having a greater negative pressure than that of the first suction chamber since the vacuum conduit is positioned closer to the further suction chambers than to the first suction chamber.

As can be seen from Fig. 1 of Medin et al. the vacuum chamber box 46 has only one suction chamber limited by the body 49 and the platen 42. The only one suction chamber of Medin et al. is connected to the vacuum source 50 via conduit 48 so that a common negative pressure is created inside the suction chamber 46. In column 4, lines 42-45, Medin et al. teach that the ports 44 in the platen 42 could be sized to provide a non-uniform vacuum pressure over the platen surface (for instance, the vacuum pressure could be relatively lower in the areas away from the print zone 28).

In contrast, the invention of the instant application teaches providing limitations between the suction chambers (13, 14) by termination edges (31).

Clearly, Medin et al. do not teach limiting different suction chambers by the use of termination edges (31) as recited in claims 1 and 14 of the instant application, but rather teach providing only one suction chamber and controlling the suction applied to the ports 44 in the platen 42 by different sizes of the ports.

An inkjet printing unit according to the invention of the instant application allows a better control of the paper sheet to be transported and printed by the printing unit since the different suction chambers disposed adjacent each other are limited by termination edges so that a well defined negative pressure is created in each suction chamber which is not the case in a printing unit according to Medin et al.

For instance, a paper sheet 22 being transported through the printing unit of Medin et al. closes the ports 44 of the platen 42 and the vacuum inside the vacuum chamber box 46 increases. As soon as the trailing edge of the paper sheet 22 passes the left hand side of the vacuum chamber box, ports at the left hand side are opened and air can be sucked into the

vacuum chamber box at the left hand side. Then, the vacuum inside the vacuum chamber box decreases not only in the left hand side but also unimpededly decreases in the right hand side of the vacuum chamber box since no termination of separate suction chambers is present.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 and 14. Claims 1 and 14 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

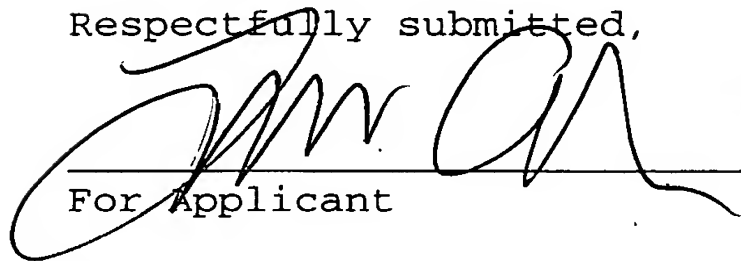
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-2 and 7-14 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

Applic. No.: 10/068,636
Amdt. Dated May 24, 2004
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If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant

LAURENCE A. GREENBERG
REG. NO. 29,308

YC

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Lerner and Greenberg, P.A.
Post Office Box 2480
Hollywood, FL 33022-2480
Tel: (954) 925-1100
Fax: (954) 925-1101